

CHAPTER 4 THE AUXILIARY'S ELECTRONIC WORLD

A. THE AUXILIARY AND THE WEB

1. The Auxiliary Web Site (<http://www.cgaux.org>) speaks with an OFFICIAL voice. See also Office of Auxiliary Web Site (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-o/cgaux/default.htm>). Excerpts from National Commodore Policy Letter 2-97 dtd. 18 August 1997.
 - a. Par. 3 "Statements of policy or procedure provided by members of the Chief Director's Office, National Elected Officers, National Directorate Commodores or Department Chiefs that are posted on the 'What's New' page, 'National Departments' pages, 'News From the Bridge' page, or 'Forms and Manuals' pages should be regarded as OFFICIAL statements. Only certain specific officers may have their announcements posted on these pages. These announcements will include the name and/or title of the submitting Coast Guard or Auxiliary officer. Therefore, members may feel secure that competent authority is providing the information. Editors of unit publications are asked to ensure that any web postings reprinted in their publications also include the name and title of the originator. Any information from the Internet that appears in a Flotilla, division, or district publication without such an attribution should Not be considered official. Additionally, the NACO, other NEXCOM and National Staff members, Chief Director and his staff, DCOs, and other knowledgeable officers frequently monitor information on the web site. If any erroneous material is ever posted, it will be quickly identified and deleted or corrected."
 - b. Par. 4 "The purpose of these announcements on the web site is to speed up the dissemination of information to the membership. There is no intent to replace the written word that flows down the Chain of Leadership and Management (elected officers) and the Chain of Communications (appointed officers). Virtually everything a member reads on these pages will appear within several days, weeks, or months in the form of published manuals, letters, NAVIGATOR articles by senior national officers and the Chief Director's staff, departmental newsletters, and so forth."
 - c. Par. 5 "On the various departmental E-mail nets, the information provided by the department chief and/or their designated representatives may be regarded as OFFICIAL."
 - d. Par. 6 "The 'Members Open Forum' on the web site is an informal and unofficial place to exchange information. Normally, information posted on the open forum is not to be considered as *official*. However, from time to time, you may note that a member of the National Executive Committee, Chief Director and his staff, or a Department Chief will submit an official response. In these instances, you may consider this an official statement of policy or procedure. A follow-up to this response should appear

- e. on the "official portion" of the web site as well as being published for subsequent dissemination to the field."
 - f. Par. 7 "Your support of this policy will be appreciated and assist in providing our members the timely information required to productively accomplish their missions." (End of quotation).
2. As you see the Auxiliary Web Site is here to stay and will play an ever increasing role of importance through-out the Auxiliary. It is time for all Flotillas to find a volunteer 'Web Watcher' to monitor the wonderful things that are taking place in the electronic information flow within the Auxiliary. A new FSO-CS staff officer position has been added to facilitate this process.
 3. It is a fact that there are Auxiliarists that do not have computers. It is a fact there are Auxiliarists that never want to have a computer. It is a fact that there are Auxiliarists that have computers and use them with varying degrees of skill. The purpose of communication through the internet is not to replace other forms of communication, but to supplement it and make accurate information available faster to a wider number of members. Already Auxiliarists are discovering that there is printed information available that they did not know existed. However, print communications will continue to be the primary means of Auxiliary communication for the next few years. If the Flotilla wants to gather the wealth of information available through the Auxiliary Web Sites; correspond with fellow Auxiliarists to ask questions and discuss solutions to problems; view new publications; check-out public law; and participate in a myriad of other UP TO THE MINUTE uses, this new electronic addition to information dissemination is a must. Stay on the cutting edge. Find the person in the flotilla who has, likes, and uses computers and ask them to be the Flotilla Web Monitor.

B. WHAT IS AVAILABLE TO THE FLOTILLA?

1. Commercial On-line Computer Services Many Commercial services are available to access and browse the internet -- Prodigy, CompuServe, America On-line, Microsoft Explorer, Netscape and several others. In addition there are local servers available with different services offered. You can access the National WEB page at <http://www.cgaux.org> and enroll through AUXWEB (look for "Add me to the list"). If you only have E-mail (JUNO users) send a request for an E-mail application to DVC-IE@cgaux.org.
2. Auxiliary E-mail Probably the best goal to shoot for is to use a service that provides **E-mail that will handle attachments** to the basic message. With this you can send messages to friends and family, other Auxiliary members, groups of Auxiliary members and for fast answers it sure beats regular mail. The attachment feature allows you to attach other files to your message. If you have a lengthy message you can compose it off-line and then attach it to your E-mail message. There are specialty E-mail groups such as (VENET) for Vessel Examiners and (ITNET) for Instructors, Public Education, and Member Training. Other nets serve other Auxiliary interests. Questions are asked and

rapidly answered. These are not venues to beat your pet peeves to death but a place for positive suggestions and discussions. Often the person who wrote the book or set the policy is reading your input and may answer directly. Try getting that accomplished through the regular mail in a reasonable amount of time.

3. Auxiliary Internet Web Site This medium probably offers the greatest rewards to the Auxiliary in the future. This is the famous (www) that precedes entry to many sites. It is a massive, loose knit, world wide computer web. You guessed it www = World Wide Web. This medium will allow us to put our manuals and publications on-line. Getting ready for a class and want to check for official changes that have not reached you yet -- look in the www site and print out the change for your class. ANSC publications can be ordered, by authorized personnel, thru E-mail on the web. (Ask your FSO-MA or FC about that). Currently, in some districts you can take practice Nav Rules Tests online. You think of a use and it has already happened or it will probably happen. Can't find blank forms? Get on the WEB; they are there. Have you appointed a Flotilla WEB Monitor yet? Why not?
4. US Coast Guard Web Site Want to check out the latest on the Coast Guard? Try (<http://www.dot.gov/dotinfo/uscg/welcome.html>). You can read the latest Commandant decisions and directives. Or go to the Office of Auxiliary Web Site (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-o/cgaux/default.htm>) for latest policy and guidance on the Auxiliary program. Use both sites to delve into Coast Guard functions. Training information regarding "C" Schools is available at: (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/tqc/>).
5. National Safety Council (<http://www.nsc.org>) will take you to the NSC page and from there you can see what is happening on the boating safety side.
6. It is anticipated that in the near future, you may be able to complete courses and update some qualifications on the internet.

C. WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS?

UNLIMITED! Make arrangements to get your Flotilla involved today to prepare for tomorrow.

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